

REMARKS

Applicants request that all claims be allowed in view of the following remarks. Claims 15-44 are pending, of which claims 15, 23, and 31 are independent.

Interview Request

In order to gain a better understanding of the current rejection, applicants respectfully request an interview with the Examiner prior to the substantive examination of this Reply. To that end, applicants' representative will be contacting the Examiner shortly to schedule an interview. However, to the extent that an interview has not been scheduled prior to the substantive examination of this Reply, applicants respectfully request the Examiner to treat the foregoing as a formal interview request and ask that the Examiner call the undersigned at (202) 783-5070 to schedule an interview.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 15-35 and 40-44 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 7,058,690 (Maehiro). Applicants request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 15-35 and 40-44 because Maehiro fails to describe or suggest all of the features recited in independent claims 15, 23, and 31.

Claims 15-22

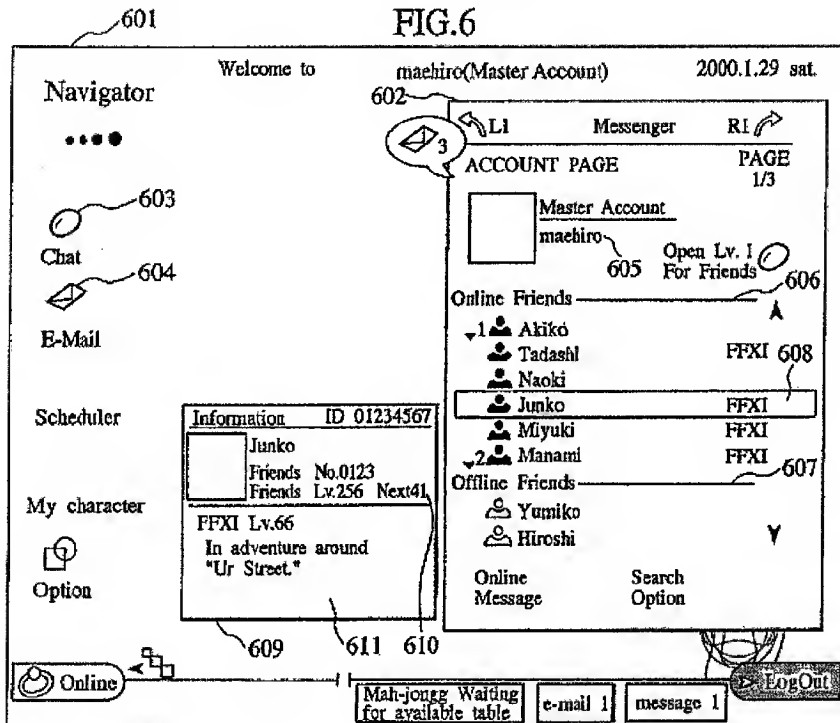
Independent claim 15 recites a method for enabling communications by a user having multiple identities from a single communications service that includes, among other features, displaying a single graphical user interface configured to accommodate a list for each of several identities of a user, wherein each list includes other identities with whom the user communicates using the identity to which the list corresponds. In addition, the method also includes using the graphical user interface to enable selection, by the user from among the several identities of the user, of a particular source identity from which to initiate an electronic communication.

Maehiro does not describe or suggest a single graphical user interface configured to accommodate a list for each of several identities of a user, nor does Maehiro describe or suggest using a graphical user interface to enable selection, by the user from among the several identities of the user, of a particular source identity from which to initiate an electronic communication. Rather, Maehiro describes a message exchange system in which, in some implementations, a first user's deletion of a second user's handle name from the first user's friend list causes the automatic deletion of the first user's handle name from the second user's friend list. See, e.g., Maehiro at Abstract; col. 2, lines 22-44; and col. 12, line 51 to col. 14, line 23. In alternative implementations, the first user's deletion of a second user's handle name from the first user's friend list causes the second user to be notified of the deletion of the second user's handle name from the first user's friend list so that the second user can delete the first user's handle name from the second user's friend list. See, e.g., Maehiro at Abstract; col. 2, lines 22-44; and col. 12, line 51 to col. 14, line 23.

In the context of this message exchange system, Maehiro presents examples of several graphical user interfaces that include friend lists associated with a user of this message exchange system. See, e.g., Maehiro at FIGS. 6-12. Importantly, however, each example graphical user interface presented by Maehiro is for only a single account of the user and is configured to accommodate only a single friend list corresponding to the single account of the user. Moreover, because each example graphical user interface presented by Maehiro is for only a single account of the user, none of the example graphical user interfaces presented by Maehiro enables a user to select a particular source identity, from among several identities of the user, from which to initiate an electronic communication. Accordingly, Maehiro fails to describe or suggest displaying a single graphical user interface configured to accommodate a list for each of several identities of a user, wherein each list includes other identities with whom the user communicates using the identity to which the list corresponds, and using the graphical user interface to enable selection, by the user from among the several identities of the user, of a particular source identity from which to initiate an electronic communication, as recited in independent claim 15.

The final Office Action contends that FIG. 6 of Maehiro discloses displaying a single graphical user interface configured to accommodate a list for each of several identities of a user, wherein each list includes other identities with whom the user communicates using the identity to

which the list corresponds, and using the graphical user interface to enable selection, by the user from among the several identities of the user, of a particular source identity from which to initiate an electronic communication. See Office Action of October 22, 2007 at page 3, lines 3-11. For reference, FIG. 6 of Maeliro is reproduced below:



Reproduction of FIG. 6 of Maeliro

In particular, the final Office Action assertion that "Fig. 6, item 602: 'Online Friends 1': Akiki, Tadashi, Naoki and 'Online Friends 2': Manami, etc." teaches displaying a single graphical user interface configured to accommodate a list for each of several identities of a user, wherein each list includes other identities with whom the user communicates using the identity to which the list corresponds, as recited in independent claim 15. In making this assertion, the final

Office Action appears to interpret the number 1 displayed adjacent to the name Akiko and the number 2 displayed adjacent to the name Manami as demarcating two separate groups of online friends for the user Maehiro. However, there is no description in Maehiro of the meaning or significance of the number 1 displayed adjacent to the name Akiko and the number 2 displayed adjacent to the name Manami. Consequently, there is no basis for the final Office Action's interpretation of the number 1 displayed adjacent to the name Akiko and the number 2 displayed adjacent to the name Manami as demarcating two separate groups of online friends for the user Maehiro. Moreover, putting aside the absence of any basis for interpreting the number 1 displayed adjacent to the name Akiko and the number 2 displayed adjacent to the name Manami as demarcating two separate groups of online friends for the user Maehiro, all of the online friends displayed in FIG. 6 are associated with the user Maehiro. As such, FIG. 6 of Maehiro fails to describe or suggest displaying a single graphical user interface configured to accommodate a list for each of several identities of a user, wherein each list includes other identities with whom the user communicates using the identity to which the list corresponds, as recited in independent claim 15.

The final Office Action also asserts that "Fig 6, items 608, 603 'online friends Junko'" teaches using the graphical user interface to enable selection, by the user from among the several identities of the user, of a particular source identity from which to initiate an electronic communication, as recited in independent claim 15. However, Maehiro describes that selection of online friend Junko by the user Maehiro from the online friends list of FIG. 6 results in the "viewer display[ing] a screen page that instructs various kinds of subcommands to JUNKO with the account 'junko.'" Maehiro at col. 12, lines 52-54. Importantly, the online friend Junko corresponds to a different user than the user Maehiro. That is to say, the online friend Junko is not an identity of the user Maehiro. As such, FIG. 6 of Maehiro does not describe or suggest using the graphical user interface to enable selection, by the user from among the several identities of the user, of a particular source identity from which to initiate an electronic communication, as recited in independent claim 15.

Accordingly, for at least the foregoing reasons, applicants request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of independent claim 15 and its dependent claims, claims 16-22, 29, and 30.

Claims 23-28

Independent claim 23 recites a graphical user interface that includes, among other features, one or more window interfaces that are structured and arranged to enable a display portion configured to make perceivable multiple identities of a user from a single electronic communication service, and to make perceivable one or more buddy lists that each have one or more constituent buddies and that each are associated with one of the multiple identities of the user. As discussed above in connection with independent claim 15, Maehiro fails to describe or suggest such a graphical user interface. Accordingly, for at least this reason, applicants request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of independent claim 23 and its dependent claims 24-28.

Claims 31-35 and 40-44

Independent claim 31 recites a method for linking multiple identities of a user from a single communications service. Among other features, the method includes creating an association between a first identity of a user and a second identity of the user such that, in response to authentication of both the first identity of the user and the second identity of the user, the association between the first identity of the user and the second identity of the user triggers display of a single graphical user interface for both the first identity of the user and the second identity of the user that is configured to accommodate a first buddy list corresponding to a first identity of the user and a second buddy list corresponding to a second identity of the user.

The final Office Action contends that, when combined, FIGS. 6 and 12 of Maehiro disclose a single graphical user interface for both a first identity of a user and a second identity of a user that is configured to accommodate a first buddy list corresponding to the first identity of the user and a second buddy list corresponding to the second identity of the user. However, FIGS. 6 and 12 of Maehiro illustrate two different interfaces, not a single interface, as recited in independent claim 31. Moreover, FIG. 6 of Maehiro illustrates a friends list of a user named Maehiro, while FIG. 12 of Maehiro illustrates a message screen page of a different user, Junko. As such, FIGS. 6 and 12 of Maehiro do not describe or suggest a single graphical user interface for both a first identity of a user and a second identity of a user that is configured to

accommodate a first buddy list corresponding to the first identity of the user and a second buddy list corresponding to the second identity of the user.

Therefore, Maehiro also does not describe or suggest creating an association between a first identity of a user and a second identity of the user such that, in response to authentication of both the first identity of the user and the second identity of the user, the association between the first identity of the user and the second identity of the user triggers display of a single graphical user interface for both the first identity of the user and the second identity of the user that is configured to accommodate the first buddy list corresponding to the first identity of the user and the second buddy list corresponding to the second identity of the user, as recited in new independent claim 31. Accordingly, for at least the foregoing reasons, applicants request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of independent claim 31 and dependent claims 32-35 and 40-44.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 36-39, which depend from independent claim 31, have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Maehiro. However, as discussed above, Maehiro does not anticipate independent claim 31. Therefore, at least because of their dependencies and for the reasons discussed above in connection with independent claim 31, applicants request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of dependent claims 36-39.

In rejecting claims 36-39, the final Office Action takes Official Notice and contends that “it is old and well known within the computing arts” to create an association between a first identity and a second identity using: (1) a one-way link configuration (as recited in claim 36); (2) a bi-directional-link configuration (as recited in claim 37); (3) a star-link configuration (as recited in claim 38); and (4) a mesh-link configuration (as recited in claim 39). See, e.g., final Office Action of October 22, 2007 at page 11, line 11 to page 13, line 4. Applicants traverse the Official Notice taken in rejecting claims 36-39. Therefore, to the extent that the rejection of claims 36-39 is maintained, applicants request evidentiary support demonstrating that creating an association between a first identity and a second identity using: (1) a one-way link configuration; (2) a bi-directional-link configuration; (3) a star-link configuration; and (4) a mesh-link configuration was well known.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 36-39 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph for allegedly failing to comply with the enablement requirement. Applicants traverse this rejection and submit that applicants' specification provides an enabling disclosure of the features recited in claims 36-39. For example, applicants submit that page 19, line 18 to page 20, line 23 provides an enabling disclosure of the features recited in claims 36-39.

Conclusion

Applicants submit that all claims are in condition for allowance.

It is believed that all of the pending issues have been addressed. However, the absence of a reply to a specific rejection, issue or comment does not signify agreement with or concession of that rejection, issue or comment. In addition, because the arguments made above may not be exhaustive, there may be reasons for patentability of any or all pending claims (or other claims) that have not been expressed. Finally, nothing in this reply should be construed as an intent to concede any issue with regard to any claim, except as specifically stated in this reply, and the amendment of any claim does not necessarily signify concession of unpatentability of the claim prior to its amendment.

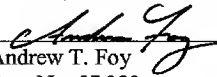
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Respectfully submitted,

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